

## Perpetua 30: A Picture of the Hills 03

Transcriber: robotchangeling

<b>Recap</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Starting Out</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quest Board [0:06:37]</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Terrapine Interest Story: Step One [0:20:30]</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Meeting Thelonious [0:29:33]</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Escort Waylon the Photographer [0:45:17]</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Approaching Beula's Ranch [0:57:04]</b>	<b>45</b>

### Recap

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Honestly, it's complicated, but it's simple. Something... I don't know how much you all know about where I come from and how we do things, but one of the most important things for all Terrapines is: what are you going to leave behind? You know, when it all happens.

[“[Perpetua](#)” by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Dre (as **Jonathan**): My plan was not to come back ‘til I found it, and I love you all very dearly, but I don't think it would be fair to say that y'all are it, so here I am, and everything is just as unsettled and unfinished as ever.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, you can't put us in the big hole.

...

Jack (as **Elena**): We're smart. They're always looking for new journalists. And did you read the paper? It's exactly the kind of stuff that we're interested in.

Ali (as **Veile**): But you think you're going to be a whole journalist overnight?

Jack (as **Elena**): Not a whole journalist, but I can go and— I can do an interview. I can review a play. There's a cave that they found a weird door in!

Ali (as **Veile**): Do interviews pay? Somebody already wrote about the cave.

Jack (as **Elena**): Okay. Firstly, "Do interviews pay?" [Art laughs] How do you think people get such good interviews? You don't get that kind of work by underpaying a journalist. [Dre laughs]

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, who was the last person you interviewed?

Jack (as **Elena**): I'm a singer. I don't traditionally interview people. But given the opportunity... I learn fast. I've got pluck.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, people always open up to me.

Jack (as **Elena**): People always open up to you, and I learn fast and I've got pluck.

...

Art (as **Nicky**): I sold my gem.

Jack (as **Elena**): There was probably, in all likelihood, there was a guy in there.

Art (as **Nicky**): [distressed] Oh no.

[song plays out]

## **Starting Out**

**Austin**: Okay. Where were we, besides the wonderful town of Spillaway Peaks?

**Jack**: We're broke, but luckily: there are jobs. [Ali laughs]

**Austin**: Oh, I see.

**Dre**: And it's particularly important for one person that we're broke.

**Austin**: How much money do you have? How much money do you need?

**Art:** Um...I certainly don't remember how much I need.

**Austin:** I think it's a grand, because I think it sold for 500. [Jack chuckles] But the buyback is double.

**Art:** Okay, great. I have 0.

**Austin:** Okay. [Austin, Jack, and Ali laugh]

**Jack:** Also, I would—

**Art:** I spent my last dollar on whatever piece of equipment I bought here, and whatever that is I don't even think is in— oh, is it the Giant Fork? It's the Giant Fork. Okay.

**Austin:** It's the Giant Fork. Yes. Yes.

**Jack:** Okay. I have—

**Art:** So I didn't spend it on something I didn't even write down. [Austin chuckles]

**Jack:** I have 110 asta.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Jack:** So, you know, we can pool some money.

**Austin:** That ain't 1000, still.

**Jack:** Nope.

**Austin:** Unless someone else has 800 or 900 or whatever.

**Art:** Oh, I also borrowed money from Jonathan, so I'm... [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Oh my god. I see.

**Dre:** It's chill, man. Don't worry about it. [Ali and Dre laugh quietly]

**Jack:** On a broader scale thing, we were sent to the...or we were kind of pointed in the

direction of the Shining Star. The Shining Star?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** By Commander Onyx, who mentioned that the fellow there might be connected to the Luminaries.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Jack:** Jonathan's sister works at the newspaper [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] and spoke about that. And I think that we also had in our notes that—

**Austin:** I just want to put “works” in, like...not quotes, but...

**Jack:** Not like we're about to. [Dre laughs quietly]

**Austin:** [sighs] I think I tried to frame it as, like, she works there, not quite intern but not quite crack reporter. Do you know what I mean?

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Mae is like— Mae wants to be— Mae doesn't know what the fuck “go to the Shining Star” means, do you know what I mean?

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** Like, Mae knows that there's a level of remove between whatever you're going there to do and whatever she's— you know, she has been kept very close to town is what I would say.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Maybe I didn't underline that well enough, but yeah. But does work there.

**Ali:** I mean, after an important conversation about OPSEC... [laughs quietly]

**Art:** Mm-hmm. [Jack chuckles]

**Ali:** There is a realization that we're, like, sent there for a private mission. Which as much as we are interested in getting dollars, you know, the sanctity of the world [laughs] is also on the line here, [**Art:** Mm.] despite how much I really want, like, a new coat.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Sure. Well.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** Or, like, a surfer soldier friend.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I did explain what was in there without you getting to meet old Sunny.

**Jack:** Well, what happened was—

**Ali:** I think there was, like, a clock or something too. I would really... [laughs quietly] I do really want money. I just want to make sure that we all know that we're also going there to speak to gods.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yes. Yes. We don't know where or what White Lactern is, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] and that seems fairly central to the prophecy.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yeah. We've been told to go do Notre Dame, and we don't know what that is, and we've never seen a cathedral in our life. And that's step one.

**Austin:** Sure. Yeah. So, is this where we're headed? Are we heading in Spillaway

Peaks to the Shining Star?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Sounds like it.

### **Quest Board [0:06:37]**

**Austin:** All right. The Shining Star is this kind of furthest west building in orange here on the top tier of Spillaway Peaks, looking down, you know, to the rest of the town. It is, like the rest of the buildings, a kind of oval-shaped large structure, and it does have a big rotating shining star on the top. I think it's daytime, so it's probably not particularly bright right now, but it lights up at night. And I think it's like a traditional five-pointed, you know, kind of cowboy-style star, you know? Kind of that farm style, you know, has a heft to it. Not just a flat one, but it has the sort of angled out. Does this make any sense? Does everybody know what I'm talking about?

**Jack:** Like a barnstar?

**Austin:** Like a what star?

**Jack:** A barnstar?

**Austin:** Yeah, like a barnstar. Exactly. Yes, like a barnstar. And at night, it glows, but right now, I think it is just a kind of big silver white star above the building, rotating around. And there's, like, a little activity below, but you're in the shops district, and so, like, there's a little bit of activity everywhere. Y'all head on in?

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yeah, let's do it.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Who is taking the lead, now that it sounds like, Elena, you are stepping back so that you don't ruin OPSEC or whatever? [Dre laughs]

**Jack:** I don't think we say OPSEC. I think we say secrecy or something. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** No, you said OPSEC, like, eight times. [Jack laughs]

**Ali:** Those aren't in character. Like, it translates.

**Jack:** It's the universal translator.

**Austin:** Oh, okay. I see, I see, I see. Yeah. So yeah, who's walking up? In the front lobby, there's a kind of reception desk. It's like a two floor structure. The bottom floor is the big printing press area, the big rolling printers, and then the second floor is— in fact, I think it's kind of like the first floor is just the very entryway, and then you kind of go down into the ground into the basement, and then the second floor you go up from the ground floor. But like, the big printers need a whole basement level plus most of a top level in order for them to, like, have enough space. So you have to go up a stairway to like the offices and stuff, but here, right out front, is a reception desk and then a board that says, like, "Freelance Opportunities," with some papers stapled to it. Or pinned to it, probably pushpinned in there.

**Jack:** Oh my god. Is this like *The Witcher* where interacting with this is also going to give us a bunch of question marks?

**Austin:** Oh yeah, 100%. [Ali chuckles] And it's going to be stuff, there's stuff on here that's like, it's not... "Freelance Opportunity," and it's like, 10 asta, you know, to go fetch some pens or whatever. Like, there's some stuff here that's, like, way not what you need. But there's also stuff here that's very clearly meant for people of your caliber to step in and help out at the Shining Star.

**Ali:** What's the big ticket one?

**Austin:** I would say the biggest ticket one is a 400 asta gig that is Investigate the Livestock Deaths: Beula's Giant Oxen have been getting sick, and some have even been dying. This is a problem. It's almost time to dredge up this new season's Rice Paddies, and so we need to make sure that the oxen don't die. There's two other big ones, potentially. One is Escort Waylon the Photographer. Waylon is a Terrapine photographer—who has been a photographer for the city for, you know, since, I'd say, Jonathan was a little Terrapine baby—and takes it all very seriously but is getting up there in age. And every year, he goes up to the Spillaway Peaks, up into the actual Clayridge Mountains to get, like, a beauty shot of the town. But he's getting old, and so he needs a little help to get up there. That is another 300.

And then there is an open-ended one. It just says, "Terrapin Interest Story," and it is between 25 and 300 asta, depending on how good you do at writing, you know, a kind of human interest story about the Terrapine, about this town, about someone in this town, someone or something in this town. I have a system for this, but you'll have to come up with a story idea. You'll have to do some interviews, you'll have to do a good job writing the prose, and then you'll have to have an accompanying photo or sketch or some sort of image to go along with it. And depending on how you do with all of that, you can make between 25 and 300 asta. That is probably the one that lets you stay in town.

**Jack:** How much can we make for Escort the Photographer?

**Austin:** 300.

**Jack:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Wow.

Ali (as **Veile**): Okay, everyone. So, which one do you think we could be most, like, efficient-slash-impressive at?

Jack (as **Elena**): [sighs]

**Jack:** Elena, bursting with ideas, glancing at Nicky, [Dre laughs] sort of bouncing on the balls of her feet, remaining quiet.

**Art:** Ha!

Ali (as **Veile**): The way I see it, I think that if we do a really good job with one of these, then it might give us an angle to go higher up the chain, as it were.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Mm. Well, I mean, I think if we want to build our reputation, I think helping old Waylon might be the best way to do it. He's...particular, but if you get on his good side, he'll talk about you.

Ali (as **Veile**): Hmm.

Jack (as **Elena**): But you don't get as much. You don't get as much for if you help out the livestock. I mean if you figure out why the livestock are sick. That's a 400 job. The old man's a 300 job.

Art (as **Nicky**): We don't know anything about livestock.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well...well. [Austin and Ali laugh]

Jack (as **Elena**): Well, but we don't need to know about livestock. We need to know about mysteries, and we know about mysteries.

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, yes.

Jack (as **Elena**): We're not going to be looking after the cows or the livestock or whatever they are, something like that. I mean, I think we should just do as many of these as we can, if I'm honest.

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, I think protect the photographer is our... That's right in our wheelhouse, whereas animal husbandry is not.

Jack (as **Elena**): It's not—

Art (as **Nicky**): Is that just breeding? [Austin laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): Nicky, we don't have to—

Art (as **Nicky**): Do I mean veterinary sciences? I don't know.

Jack (as **Elena**): Yeah. I could also...we could also negotiate the fee.

Ali (as **Veile**): No.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Eh...

Art (as **Nicky**): That's not how I usually see a board with stuff posted on it.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I also remember negotiating fees and prices not going so great.

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh, come on. Don't hold it over my head. I have good days, and I have bad days. But it's the spirit that's important.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Uh...I don't know. Doesn't feel right, trying to put people over a barrel like that.

Jack (as **Elena**): I learned my lesson with the rat. Only haggling in situations...where we're right. [laughter]

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well, you know, maybe... Well, then maybe we need to do a really good job and then have a righteous case for a tip.

Ali (as **Veile**): Mm.

Jack (as **Elena**): Where does Beula live?

**Austin**: Beula lives up towards the— ooh, I just moved the ocean. That's not what I meant to do. Beula lives, like, up past the, like in this top area basically. Kind of actually out of town, you know?

**Jack:** Towards the mountains.

**Austin:** Towards the mountains.

**Jack:** I think we should just take all of them. Whether or not we complete them. We're at the quest board. We should take every item off the quest board so no one else can take it. [Austin laughs]

Ali (as **Veile**): [cross] But then—

**Jack:** [cross] This is me speaking out of character.

**Dre:** Oh, sure. Well, you gotta put it in our journal.

**Jack:** Yeah, exactly, and we're also doing the RPG thing of just stacking the...like when you're in a town in an MMO, and you pick up all the quests, and then you leave the town, and you're like, "Am I going to walk through the circle where the quest is, and then I can do that?" [Dre chuckles]

**Ali:** I think Veile might go into, like, lecture mode, the more that you push this.

**Austin:** Please.

**Ali:** A thing that's, like...

**Art:** Go for it. Yeah, I'm...

**Ali:** [laughs quietly] Well, like, I'm going to talk about it out of character before I find it in character, but I think, like, part of the lorebook is that she's part of the, like, guild quest religion. Is this true, Austin? I'm remembering this right, right?

**Austin:** That is right, yeah, uh huh.

**Ali:** That part of the, like, the belief system that she is in, being from a town that does probably not follow this, [laughs quietly] because not a lot of people go in and out, but maybe they need very specific use cases of, like, "Can you please go to the forest or to the nearest town to get a bunch of eggs or whatever?" [laughs quietly] But the sort of,

like,

(as **Veile**): Well, no, you can't do that, because, you know, it's about community, [Ali laughs] and enrichment of people's lives, and if we take all of the things and then somebody else comes and really needs a gem, then they're not going to have it, and then we're going to run ourselves ragged. I would like to do a good job, Elena.

Art (as **Nicky**): Did you say if someone else needs a gem? [Austin and Ali laugh]

Jack (as **Elena**): Don't keep bringing the gem up!

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, I'm just saying there are many cases in a person's life where they, [hushed] you know, accidentally sell a magical gem, and then... [Ali laughs]

Art (as **Nicky**): I don't think there are! I think this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and maybe it calls for a particular way of thinking about things.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, I just think we need to leave opportunities for people.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Wait, wait, wait, wait. Nicky, you had a gem?

Ali (as **Veile**): [quietly] No.

Art (as **Nicky**): [sadly] Ohh. Yeah...

Dre (as **Jonathan**): They got people in 'em, Nicky!

Art (as **Nicky**): I didn't know that then! I didn't know that! I was the *last* to know that.

Jack (as **Elena**): Veile, I hear what you're saying. I do. And it's so important to help people. And this is why if we don't complete these tasks, we come back and we pin them right back on the board.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I mean, we could just write down the details and leave the post here.

Ali (as **Veile**): [gasps] My goodness. [Austin laughs]

**Jack**: Now Elena is caught in a bind, because... [quiet laughter]

**Art**: What?

**Jack**: Because the thing that she actually feels is we should prevent other people from getting these quests so we can complete them faster. [Dre, Ali, and Jack laugh]

**Austin**: Mm.

**Jack**: But she can't admit this. She's thinking about the Miniature Snake rocking up and being like, [sinisterly] "We're going to do journalism," or whatever. [Ali laughs quietly]

**Art**: Evil journalism. "We're going to find things out, and we're not going to tell no one." We don't have to worry about that, actually. That's not a problem.

**Jack**: [laughs quietly] Oh, about we don't actually care about the concept of this journalism, you mean?

**Art**: Well, yeah. If they— evil journalism isn't— I don't think we're competing with that.

**Dre**: Not yet. [Ali laughs]

**Jack**: No, I think, caught in this Socratic bind, Elena is going to remain silent and sort of, like, you know, frown and be like,

(as **Elena**): I suppose we could just write them down.

**Art**: And we have to do the escort mission first, because that's the one that we could get scooped on.

**Jack**: Yeah, pick up the escort mission. We roll out through Beula's livestock. We check them out. We go up into the mountain, and along the way, we interview people we meet.

Ali (as **Veile**): And who knows if this livestock plague isn't from the mountain?

Jack (as **Elena**): It could be from the mountain. Exactly. This is what I'm saying.

Ali (as **Veile**): Or we could have Beula take photos— no, well. Maybe he's taken photos.

Jack (as **Elena**): If we do a good job—

**Jack:** Waylon. Waylon?

**Austin:** Waylon is the photographer.

**Jack:** Beula is the man who owns the cows. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Beula is the farmer, is the rancher. Waylon: photographer.

**Art:** Bueller is Matthew Broderick's character in *Ferris Bueller's Day Out*.

**Austin:** That's right. Third person, yeah. Beula, like A, with an A-H or whatever.

**Ali:** I see.

**Jack:** Oh, you're saying Bueller?

**Austin:** No, I'm not saying Bueller. Oh my goodness.

**Art:** Sorry. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** You really confused this for us. [Jack chuckles]

**Jack:** All right. We're going to go in, I think. Or do we just leave? Do we just take the information and leave and get started?

**Austin:** Well, you're going to need Waylon, who is upstairs.

**Jack:** Oh, we are going to need Waylon. That's true. [chuckles]

**Austin:** Yeah, mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Mm.

(as **Jonathan**): Oh, hey, you know what we could do. We could write the human interest story about Waylon.

Jack (as **Elena**): We could. Old photographer?

**Austin**: [snorts] Great pitch.

Ali (as **Veile**): That seems like cheating.

Art (as **Nicky**): Cheating? [Austin laughs quietly]

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well...

Art (as **Nicky**): Maybe a little bit of inside baseball, and now that I think about it, that's a term that doesn't make sense in this fantasy world.

**Austin**: [laughs] Have we not had baseball in Perpetua yet?

**Jack**: Stitchescore. No.

**Austin**: Yeah, was Stitchescore? That didn't have any baseball in it? [Ali laughs quietly]

**Jack**: No. We haven't had any yet, but I know it's fucking out there.

**Dre**: Yeah.

**Jack**: But it's like Jerma. It's like Jerma baseball, you know?

**Austin**: Oh, I see.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well, I mean, Veile, it's not cheating, because it'd be a story worth writing. I mean, Waylon's one of the few people that's been around here longer than me and...

Jack (as **Elena**): Old photographer.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): We don't know how much longer he'll be here. This could be one of his last trips. And this is what he's done his whole life.

Art (as **Nicky**): People love photography. It's frankly weird. [quiet laughter]

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, if only we do it from the heart.

Jack (as **Elena**): Whoa.

## **Terrapine Interest Story: Step One [0:20:30]**

**Austin:** All right, it sounds like you're doing the first step of my Terrapine Interest Story quest right now. [Ali laughs] There are four phases. There's the story idea. There's an interview segment. There's the prose itself, the writing.

**Jack:** [laughs quietly] Oh my god.

**Austin:** And then there's a photo or a sketch. This is four rolls.

**Jack:** Austin has written a *Fallen London* mission.

**Austin:** That's right. Each one— So, it's a 12 step clock, but here's the thing. You get paid per tick of the clock, basically. You determine how difficult you want each of these things to be, and if you hit it, you get that many ticks on the clock, and if you miss it, you don't get any. So, for instance, you could say, "I want a difficulty of 1." Or, sorry, a difficulty of 7; a level 1 difficulty. 7, 10, 13, 16, like normal. And if you get that one, you get the 1. You get 1 point. You get 25 asta. But if you say, "I want the difficulty of 13," which would give you 3 ticks of the clock and therefore 75 asta for that phase, and then you get a 12, then you don't get anything for that phase, because you whiffed on it. So you're betting. You're basically, like, saying, "How good can we do this thing?"

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** And what's this first step? This first step is coming up with the idea?

**Austin:** That is correct. Which you've done, and you get to tell me, basically, like, how complex or how thoughtful or interesting is your version of that idea, and that's sort of the bet you're making.

**Jack:** And—

**Austin:** Let me put a 12 step clock on screen. Go ahead. Keep going.

**Jack:** You'll tell us what we're going to roll, based on that?

**Austin:** Each step—

**Dre:** No, I think we pick the difficulty, right?

**Austin:** You pick the difficulty, but, you know, yeah, we get to— I think that the story idea is Insight + Insight, for instance.

**Jack:** Okay.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Jack:** Right. Wow. Okay. Sitting on the little bench outside the Shining Star.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** With her fingers pressed to her temples like she's thinking really hard.

**Austin:** Yeah, who is taking the lead on this, actually?

**Jack:** My Insight is 10.

**Dre:** As is mine.

**Jack:** As is, I think, Veile's.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** We're clever.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** We are.

**Jack:** Well, Jonathan, do you want to start?

**Art:** You know, I think it's going to be one of y'all. [Jack and Ali laugh quietly]

**Austin:** Oh. Okay.

**Jack:** Jonathan, you pitched the, like, "He's an old man. He might die soon." [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** [laughs] I did, yes.

Art (as **Nicky**): You know not to say that out loud, right? That's... [Jack chuckles]

**Dre:** No. Yeah. I also think it makes sense for Jonathan to be pitching this, since he's from here and, like, knows Waylon.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Dre:** Okay. So we're Insight + Insight?

**Austin:** Okay, so, presumably other people are helping, right?

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** So everybody can roll it, and you can add 1 for everything over a 10. And if you have— important thing! Important thing that we have not been doing. If you have a Bond with the person you're helping, or it might be vice versa, you get to add the level of that Bond to the roll on a helping roll.

**Art:** Oh, fuck yeah!

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Wow.

**Austin:** So, I'm pretty sure that's true. Let me double check it. I bumped into this last

time. Let me double check that that's right. Uh... Is it called a Group Check? What is the actual thing called? Yeah, Group Check. There's a leader. "The supporting character performs a Support Check. Each supporting character that successfully performed their Check grants a +1 bonus to their leader's Check. If any—" Oh, sorry, it's the other way. It's if you succeed at your Support Check, then on top of the +1, whoever has the highest Strength among Bonds gets to add that Strength to the roll too. So, let's do this, and I'll talk through it with actual numbers.

**Jack:** Okay.

**Art:** Sure.

**Jack:** Do we need to make the bet before we start rolling?

**Austin:** Yes. Well, the supporters don't, but the main person...

**Jack:** Okay.

**Austin:** I guess, yes, we do. You should make the bet now. You should make the bet now, before you know how much support you have.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Jack:** Our stats here are good, so I think we should make a big bet.

**Dre:** Are you thinking 13 or 16?

**Art:** I wish you hadn't said that.

**Jack:** [chuckles] Why, Art?

**Art:** Classically, you've doomed us.

**Dre:** That's true. You have jinxed us. You have given us the podcasters' jinx.

**Jack:** [laughs quietly] Right, but I did need to communicate it down the microphone, unfortunately. Let's say...and we can Fabula Point this, right, Austin?

**Austin:** Yes, like anything else.

**Jack:** So let's say 16.

**Austin:** You're going all the way. You're going to the highest possible difficulty. That'll give you 4 ticks of this 12 step clock.

**Dre:** Yeah, let's do it.

**Art:** All right, yeah.

**Austin:** It's actually more than a— Sorry, it's actually more than a 12 step clock. It's a 16 step clock, because there's four phases. You could actually get 400. You could get a lot from this story. You can actually get 425 for this story.

**Dre:** Heck yeah.

**Jack:** And by betting big early, we give ourselves the opportunity to make up our losses later, rather than saving everything until the last big bet.

**Austin:** That's true.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Jack:** Okay. I am going to roll Insight + Insight.

**Austin:** Well, who's helping first? Let's do it in order. Like, who's helping crack this idea? Because then we'll do the support rolls first, so we have that.

**Jack:** Oh, Jonathan, right? I think that's what we...

**Austin:** Oh, okay, sorry. I wasn't sure if anybody else was also helping. So, Jonathan...

**Ali:** Well, somebody's...

**Dre:** Wait, I thought Jonathan...

**Art:** Jonathan's...

**Dre:** Jonathan's leading, right?

**Austin:** I see. Jonathan's leading.

**Art:** Yes.

**Austin:** I didn't understand that. My bad.

**Dre:** Yeah. No, you're fine.

**Jack:** And then we're...

**Austin:** Ali, what were you going to ask?

**Jack:** Sorry, what were you going to say, Ali?

**Ali:** Yeah, I was like, "Wait, I want to help."

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. Then, yes.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** Helpers should be rolling Insight + Insight first.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** All of them. Anybody who's helping.

**Jack:** Okay. And we can all help.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. That's a 10 from Nicky. Rare— or, no, does Nicky have good Insight?

**Art:** Nope.

**Austin:** All right. [Dre laughs] That's an 8 from Elena.

**Jack:** Oh. I would like to use a Fabula Point to reroll that—

**Austin:** You cannot.

**Jack:** Oh, not in a helping. No, I think...

**Austin:** I don't believe, because it's not a Skill Check. Yeah. It's a Support Check.

**Dre:** Yeah, it's a Support Check. Yeah.

**Austin:** Correct.

**Jack:** That's fine.

**Austin:** And that's another 10, so that's +2. [Jack laughs] And then, between Nicky and Veile, Veile who wrote, "Emotional heart of a story." I love it. Great. [Ali laughs]

**Jack:** Describing herself.

**Austin:** Well, no, it's the case that Veile just made, right? Isn't that what you were just saying, Veile?

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But I do also think Veile is the emotional heart of the story.

**Austin:** I see. Yes. [Ali laughs]

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Nicky and Veile, which of you has a higher Bond with Jonathan?

**Art:** I have a 2.

**Ali:** I think I also have a 2.

**Austin:** So then, Jonathan, take a +3 to this roll.

**Ali:** Whoa.

**Austin:** Sorry, +4 to this roll, because it's + 2 + 2. Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. I don't know why I'm doing a custom roll.

**Austin:** 'Cause it's fun.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Yeah. That's an 11.

**Austin:** That's under a 16.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Do you want to Fabula Point this?

**Dre:** I would love to Fabula Point, and I will invoke my Identity of being a Terrapine.

**Austin:** Yeah. Oh, you've kind of already shown us this, right? You already know all about Waylon. You know Waylon's history.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You understand what he means to the city or the town. There's your...

**Dre:** Expand. Okay.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** I'm going to reroll both of these, because they're both low.

**Austin:** Yeah, you rolled a 4 and a 3, which +4 gets you an 11. Not quite where you need to be.

**Dre:** Agh!

**Austin:** That is a— well, no, no, no, no, no! Oh, that's with the +4, huh?

**Dre:** Yeah, that's with the +4.

**Ali:** Aw.

**Austin:** That's a 6 plus 3 plus 4 is only a 13.

**Jack:** Didn't we learn that we can keep—in the last session—we can keep using Fabula Points, just not...

**Dre:** Well, I don't have any more.

**Austin:** Well, there you go.

**Jack:** Ah. Well.

**Austin:** There's your problem. [Dre laughs] There's your problem right there.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So, what goes wrong here? How do you overcomplicate the Waylon pitch?

**Dre:** I think that's it. I think it's overcomplicating. It's... Here, I'll just do it in character. That'll be way more fun.

(as **Jonathan**): Okay. So, what do we gotta know about Waylon? Well, okay. I heard that when he was growing up, he got a camera when he was, like, I don't know, 62? So we should probably ask him about that.

Jack (as **Elena**): Mm.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): And we should probably ask him about what his favorite pictures are. That would be good too.

Ali (as **Veile**): Wait. The audience should decide that.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I remember he really likes carrots? Uh, hmmm... [sighs]

**Austin:** [laughs] "He likes carrots" is great.

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, I'd want to know that.

Jack (as **Elena**): We can ask him questions about the carrots.

Ali (as **Veile**): I think that you guys are biased towards restaurants. [Austin and Jack laugh]

Art (as **Nicky**): What? No.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] No, you're right.

Jack (as **Elena**): Us?

Art (as **Nicky**): Everyone likes to know about carrots.

Ali (as **Veile**): I don't think people want to know about that.

**Austin**: Are we having this conversation on the way up to get Waylon? [Ali laughs]

**Dre**: Yeah.

(as **Jonathan**): Y'all, I don't know how much I know about Waylon.

Jack (as **Elena**): It's fine. We can ask him what he needs to know. We can see what his favorite foods are. We can maybe ask him about the restaurants in town. [Austin laughs, sighs]

## **Meeting Thelonious [0:29:33]**

**Austin**: As you make your way through the paper's kind of office, a lot of folks are out and about. It's not a huge office. Like, there's only a handful of people who really work here. But most of them are not here, so even as a fairly tight crew, it's pretty empty. However, you do see Waylon. Waylon is currently at a wall with, like, you know, a corkboard, looking at various photos that have come in recently or that he's taken recently maybe. He is a little Terrapine. He's shrunk down a little bit. He's leaning over. But he hears you all talking about him, and, you know, I don't think he turns around, but we see him clock that he's being talked about. Also up here right now is your sister, Jonathan, Mae. Mae is here and is type-type-typing away on something. And then there

is an office. There's like a closed in office of the editor in chief, Thelonious, a.k.a. Theo, who I think sees you all come up the stairs and then stands up, having seen you. Was sitting in thought at his desk and then sees you and, like, makes eye contact with you. What do you do? I think Mae is too absorbed in typing right now to, you know, catch you coming up the stairs quite yet.

**Dre:** Mm. Yeah. Like, genuine but hesitant, like, smile and wave, of like,

(as **Jonathan**): Hey, man. I know it's been a while, but I'm happy to see ya.

**Austin:** You know, I think waves you in, and you saying that I think catches May's attention, Maebela, and she kind of looks up at you and says,

(as **May**): Jonathan! You came!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, of course.

**Austin:** Yeah. And at that point, Theo comes, you know, out of the office. The door has been open, but comes out and is like,

(as **Thelonious**): I gotta tell you, Mae. I didn't believe he'd come. Good to see you, Jon.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Good to see you too. How's the printing business?

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Oh, we get by. You and your friends want to come take a seat, get caught up?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah. That sounds good.

**Austin:** And leads you into the office. I think Waylon watches from his little wrinkled eyes as you go in, and, you know, having overheard some of it, starts to get his stuff together, which might take him a little bit.

**Dre:** Sure.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): You going to introduce me to your friends, Jon?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Oh, yeah, sorry. You know I always forget about that kind of stuff. This is Nicky.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Nicky.

Art (as **Nicky**): How are ya?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): This is Veile.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Veile.

Ali (as **Veile**): Hello. Hi.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): And last, but certainly not least, is Elena.

Jack (as **Elena**): It's nice to meet you.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Pleasure. The name's Thelonious. This is my publication. I've known Jon for quite some time, though we haven't seen him around this way in a minute or two, which ain't no problem as far as I'm concerned, but it is good to have you back around. How long you staying for?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Well, kind of is a day-by-day thing. Basically until a job is done.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): What type of job you in town for?

**Dre:** I think Jonathan also, like, looks at Nicky with, like, a side eye. [laughs] Like, okay, are we doing this? Are we telling people now?

**Art:** I mean, are you going to tell a *journalist*? I would... I mean, I can't say this out loud, but like... [Ali laughs quietly] [cross] A slightly admonishing look.

**Dre:** [cross] I do like the idea of us having this conversation with, like, eye looks back and forth. [laughs]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** Yeah. Like a tight head shake and a slightly narrowed look.

**Dre:** Yeah.

(as **Jonathan**): Well, we got a tip from a fellow named Onyx. Does that name ring a bell or mean anything to you?

Austin (as **Thelonious**): A tip? What type of tip did a fellow named Onyx give you about little old Theo?

**Austin:** Theo is not little. Theo is a Terrapine like Jonathan but is, I think, bigger than Jonathan, wider than Jonathan, and is also kind of a bluish purple turtle instead of... I've been picturing Jonathan as being kind of traditional greenish, brownish, grayish.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. Yep.

**Austin:** And I think Theo has a kind of bluish tint. And is a biggun, you know?

**Art:** When you say, "traditional turtle," we all immediately knew what you meant. [Jack laughs]

**Austin:** Okay. Making sure.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Yeah, so, again, he asked you,

(as **Thelonious**): What type of tip did you get?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): He advised us to seek out a friend beneath the shining star.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): [chuckles] Ah.

**Austin:** Gets up from the seat and walks over and shuts the door. Like, the glass office door, you know? He comes back over and sits down and says,

(as **Thelonious**): Sunny days always warm the spirit, don't they?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [hushed] Is this a...are we talking in code still?

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, do they?

Austin (as **Thelonious**): I see. All right. Well, that's a shame.

**Dre**: Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Can I backtrack and make a roll to see if I—

**Austin**: You don't know this.

**Dre**: Okay. All right.

**Austin**: You don't know what code he's looking for. You just don't.

**Dre**: Sure.

**Austin**: You weren't given— This is not Austin testing you.

**Jack**: Yeah. We also haven't been tricked here.

**Dre**: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin**: Yeah.

**Jack**: There was not a...

**Austin**: Yeah, correct.

**Jack**: Yeah.

**Dre**: Gotcha. Okay.

**Jack**: This is...

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Well. I suppose if Onyx sent you to me, then you know a little, but if you don't know how to respond to that, you must not know a lot. Fair to say?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Yeah. Yeah, it's kind of been that way since jump,

unfortunately.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Mm-hmm.

Ali (as **Veile**): We're quite eager to learn, you see.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): I'm quite eager to teach. It's why I started the Shining Star. It's our obligation, I believe. I'm all for what we do here, leaving a legacy behind, but living to die, that ain't living at all. Unfortunately, you are not members of our organization, you see, and so I am limited in what I can share with you. But I'm happy to do what I can to put you on the path, and perhaps I could even vouch for you, maybe get you involved? I would need a showing of interest, evidence of quality. Do you understand?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Competence?

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Something like that, but material.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Can't tell if you've got something specific in mind or if you're doing that thing you do.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): [amused huff]

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, we saw that board of requests downstairs, but if there was something even more material than that...ahem...

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Oh, that would speak well to the competence, as you put it. Mm, but there is a particular...mm. There is a cave I can't reach, because I can't leave town. [Ali laughs quietly]

Jack (as **Elena**): Tell me more.

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, that's...

Austin (as **Thelonious**): There's word that some old ruins had been there. Let me...

**Austin:** Opens up a drawer and produces a couple of sketches to show you.

Jack (as **Elena**): Whoa.

**Austin:** Give me, um... Give me a Recall. Is that what you just were doing, Insight + Insight?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Give me Insight + Insight on these. I think this can— okay. [Jack and Austin laugh]

**Jack:** Oh my god. Oh my god.

**Ali:** Oh no.

**Dre:** This is great. I love that this just makes Jonathan, like, look just so anxious and uncomfortable to be here.

**Austin:** [pained] Oh my god, what are we doing? Ohh.

**Jack:** You can't Fabula Point your way out of a critical fumble, right?

**Austin:** Specifically you cannot.

**Jack:** Yep.

**Austin:** A fumble is not Fabula Pointable.

**Ali:** Mm-mm.

**Jack:** And that means that he gets to take an Opportunity.

**Austin:** That is right. He gets to take an Opportunity.

**Art:** Well, we weren't using them, so I think it's only fair someone gets to. [Austin and Jack laugh]

**Austin:** Oh lord.

**Jack:** I don't trust this fucking guy. I've...ugh.

**Austin:** I think this is simple. I think this is Faux Pas: "Choose a creature present on the scene. They make a compromising statement chosen by the person who controls them." You just have to, out loud, say exactly what it is that you see here. I mean, you can tell me how you frame this, but I think the thing [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] that's happening here is you are just like, "Oh yeah, this is this." You recognize the stonework here and some of the hallways instantly. This is the same sort of stonework that was in the fallen dragon tower from your very first adventure with Veile.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** You're like, "Oh yeah." You tell me how that sounds.

**Dre:** No, that sounds great, and I'm wondering if the faux pas here is something to do with the fucking dragon burn scar that I have on my shell from those first ruins we were in.

**Austin:** Oh. Sure. Sure. What is it? Do you think that you, like, point it out directly? Do you think you...

**Dre:** Maybe it hurts. I don't know.

**Austin:** Ah...mm...

**Dre:** I can't remember if it was a good or a bad person who put that thing on me.  
[laughs]

**Austin:** It was not a good one.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It was not a particularly good one. I see what you're saying. You're saying, okay, you're saying actually something worse than a faux pas. You're not saying you

embarrass yourself here. You're saying that there's some sort of reaction simply to being in the presence of the sketches of this other dragon tower. That's kind of interesting. Yeah. I think that that mark glows blue for a second, and I think, instantly, Theo is like,

(as **Thelonious**): Now that's interesting. I ain't never seen nothing quite like that before.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I think a ghost gave it to me.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Oh, you've been away for real real.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Brother, I could tell you some stories, but it looks like you're looking for a new story, so.

**Austin**: Yeah, I just want to really emphasize that when it glows blue like that, you know, you don't take any damage, but it does feel like being touched.

**Dre**: Mm-hmm.

**Austin**: It does feel like there's pressure for a second on top of the heat, you know?

**Dre**: Yeah. Maybe it makes also Jonathan, like, jump, and he bumps into something and knocks something over.

**Austin**: [sympathetic chuckle] Yeah.

(as **Thelonious**): Don't worry about it. In any case, this old stonework in the back of a cave that it shouldn't be in, and I have some ideas of what it *might* be, but I'm looking for someone who is stout enough to go see what it *is*. Whoever can do that, well, I'd call them a luminary. Among their peers, of course.

Jack (as **Elena**): We'll do it. And we'll do the other stuff too.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Looks like old Waylon's just about ready.

Jack (as **Elena**): What was your first memory of his photography? [Dre laughs

quietly]

Austin (as **Thelonious**): I grew up with it, like Jonathan here. It was probably the yearly photo.

Art (as **Nicky**): Mm.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): First time I saw it all. Spillaway Peaks. All the homes, all the stores, the Clutch. The Shell Barrow, which was, at the time, not so high up. It was before the flood. I remember I saw it, and I thought it looked small. The world is much, much bigger than this little place. Make sure to get back before Rehearsal. I would hate to hear [**Jonathan**: Ugh.] your family blame me for further absence. You feel me?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): You don't gotta worry 'bout that. They don't blame nobody but me for that. And they're not wrong.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Well, they have a particular perspective on it all.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Yeah.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Good luck, and a pleasure to meet you all.

Ali (as **Veile**): Might I ask you another question for the story, sir?

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Mm-hmm.

Ali (as **Veile**): Assuming you're the decision maker for these sorts of things in the paper. Have you thought about the year after his last photo?

Austin (as **Thelonious**): [sighs] I've given it some thought. Your friend's sister put her name in the ring, but time will tell. Frankly, I think Waylon deserves to pick his own heir, so to speak. You follow?

Ali (as **Veile**): Yes, sir. Thank you for that answer.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): Get some coffee on the way out. Got the best machine

in town.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Thank you.

**Austin**: He nods to you, and stands up to open the door for you and shake everybody's hands on the way out. And gives you, Jonathan, a deep shake and like a hand on the shell. Not too close to the scar, but...

**Dre**: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Austin (as **Thelonious**): It is good to see you here. It lifts me to know you and I are on the same side of things, even if we're not quite at the same speed.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] I'm eager to get caught up to pace. You know I hate any kind of puzzle where I don't have all the pieces.

**Austin**: Just gives you a big grin. As if, like, you're referencing something specific, you know what I mean?

**Dre**: Mm-hmm.

**Austin**: Like, oh yeah, that time with the puzzle where you lost the piece. [Austin, Ali, and Art chuckle] And lets you go.

## **Escort Waylon the Photographer [0:45:17]**

**Austin**: Waylon is ready. Waylon has on... Waylon has camping gear. Waylon has, like, a tent and a fishing hat—you know, like one of the bucket hats—and a big, you know, camera stand over the shoulder and a backpack or some sort of, like, waist pack maybe with some additional, like, outdoorsy gear and has some trail mix in a little side pouch.

**Art**: Oh, that's nice.

**Austin**: Yeah.

(as **Waylon**): It's the kind that has seaweed in it.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Ooh.

Art (as **Nicky**): Ahh.

Austin (as **Waylon**): They don't make it anymore.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Wait, Waylon. How old's that trail mix?

Austin (as **Waylon**): It ages, like cheese.

Ali (as **Veile**): Mm.

Austin (as **Waylon**): That means it tastes better now.

Art (as **Nicky**): Oh, I don't know that that's true.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Let's get moving.

**Austin:** And just starts walking in front of you. [Dre and Jack laugh] Waylon is on the move!

**Dre:** Hell yeah, dude.

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** One foot after another, old man! Let's get it.

**Jack:** It's when you start an escort mission in a video game. It's a particular kind of horror when they move very slowly and, you know, they lag behind you. But it's another kind of horror when you exit the quest screen and they just start moving.

**Austin:** [chuckles] Uh huh. [Ali laughs]

**Jack:** And you're like, "Well, fuck, okay. I was going to do something else. Off we go."

**Austin:** And he is moving.

**Jack:** Waylon is an auto scroll.

**Austin:** That's right. The Waylon. Yeah, exactly. [Dre chuckles] Terrible for speedruns. And does, just starts to move towards the edge of town.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** What were you going to say, Elena?

**Jack:** I think I was just going to talk to Waylon, but I don't know whether or not we want to get out of town and kind of pick that up later.

**Austin:** Sure. Either way is fine. You know, you're walking. You're on your way. I would say, as a note, that I think that the Beula's farm is, like, in town still, but you will have to do a Travel roll to get up to where Waylon's photo is taken from.

**Dre:** Mm.

Jack (as **Elena**): Mr. Waylon. My name's Elena. It's nice to meet you. We're going to be helping you up the mountain today.

Austin (as **Waylon**): That's right.

Jack (as **Elena**): I'm sure you've got it all in hand, [**Waylon**: Nope.] but we're just here— [pause, laughter] No?

Austin (as **Waylon**): Why would we be paying you?

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh, I just figured you've been up here a lot, you know, all your life and stuff. But no, that's a fair point, when you put it like that. We're going to—

Austin (as **Waylon**): Don't presume.

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh, I didn't mean to— No, I didn't mean to presume.

**Jack:** Looks back over her shoulder at everyone else, like, "Damn." [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** I think Jonathan gives her, like, a "Tried to tell you!" kind of look. [quiet laughter]

Jack (as **Elena**): So, you've been a photographer all your life?

Austin (as **Waylon**): No, I used to be a baby.

Ali (as **Veile**): Teeheeheehee!

Jack (as **Elena**): Ohoho, yeah.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [guffaws]

Austin (as **Waylon**): Swam around with my clutchmates. Not a single camera.

Jack (as **Elena**): Me too.

Austin (as **Waylon**): You had clutchmates?

Jack (as **Elena**): Nope. Used to be a baby.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Mm.

Jack (as **Elena**): And don't we all have clutchmates, really?

Austin (as **Waylon**): No.

Jack (as **Elena**): Um, look. We need to stop off at Beula's farm really quickly, if that's okay with you.

Austin (as **Waylon**): So you're not taking the job. I guess I'll go put all my stuff away.

Jack (as **Elena**): No, we're taking the job.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): No, no, no, no.

Austin (as **Waylon**): I guess I'll just post the quest again.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): No.

Jack (as **Elena**): No, no, no, no, no, no, no. No. It's a little standby, because we

were also thinking about, like, interviewing you as we go.

Ali (as **Veile**): Shhh. [Austin laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): [hushed] What?

Ali (as **Veile**): [hushed] It should be secret.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Interviewing me as we go? I gotta be ready to take the photograph.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, about the town, you see.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Well, why don't you talk to Jonathan? He's from here.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, but you have a unique perspective.

Austin (as **Waylon**): That's true.

Ali (as **Veile**): I'm quite interested in this whole scenery photo thing. [Ali laughs]

**Jack:** You're doing great.

Ali (as **Veile**): Which—

**Art:** You can tell you're doing great because of how people are talking to you. [quiet laughter]

**Austin:** Yeah.

Ali (as **Veile**): It must be so valuable to be able to measure the change year by year.

Austin (as **Waylon**): There is value in it. You can see how the water changes. You can see what new buildings get built. You can sometimes even see how many people there are, if I time it right and get a lot of people out at once inside of the photograph. You can also see what time of year it is. Sometimes I take it in

the summer. Sometimes I take it in the spring. You can see the flowers if I take it in the spring. Sometimes I take it from higher up or lower down, and that produces a different effect in the viewer. I think sometimes it's good when two photos look just alike but there's a little difference. That makes a good photo.

Jack (as **Elena**): Hmm.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Do you ever take photographs, Miss Veile?

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, no. I... [quiet awkward laugh]

Austin (as **Waylon**): I didn't think so.

Ali (as **Veile**): Okay. [Ali laughs]

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [pointedly] I mean, Veile, you were telling me that you wanted to learn how, right?

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, yes. Well, well, yes. Yes, of course.

Art (as **Nicky**): All up and down the road. Photos, photos, photos.

Jack (as **Elena**): She doesn't stop talking about it.

Austin (as **Waylon**): How many parts of a camera are you familiar with?

Ali (as **Veile**): Um, well, you have the light, you see. And then you have the shutter. And you have the little button. Oh, and the viewfinder, of course.

Art (as **Nicky**): Those are all parts. Can't argue with that.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Hmm. I suppose you can't.

**Austin**: Just walking. [Dre laughs]

Ali (as **Veile**): You know, I... Well, photography is quite new to me, but I think pictures, when you really think about it, can be quite metaphorical.

Jack (as **Elena**): Whoa.

Art (as **Nicky**): Oh.

Ali (as **Veile**): And if you think about it that way, [Ali laughing quietly] I've been taking photographs of people all my life. You know, by... [Dre and Ali laugh]

**Jack**: Oh, he's not going to like this, I can tell you.

**Austin**: What are we going to roll? I think we gotta...

Ali (as **Veile**): By... [Ali and Jack laugh]

**Austin**: Mm-hmm.

**Jack**: By looking?

Ali (as **Veile**): By examining them and, you know, listening to someone's feelings, you know, is a way of documentation just as well.

Art (as **Nicky**): Is that so?

Austin (as **Waylon**): I suppose like a portrait. I suppose like a portrait. Portrait's kind of similar, I suppose. Hmm...hmm. What type of questions you want to ask me?

**Austin**: Kind of relenting, seeing the determination.

**Ali**: [laughs quietly] What kind of questions *do* I want to ask you?

**Austin**: Well, this is a great question, because you have to set the difficulty, yet again.

**Ali**: Oh my goodness.

**Austin**: This is a conversational check. I think this is going to be Insight + Willpower for your interview.

**Ali**: Yippee. [quiet laughter]

**Austin:** As always, you can set 7, 10, 13, or 16. Make 25 per, 25 asta per success here, but you have to pick your own difficulty ahead of time.

**Art:** Oh, maybe 13.

**Ali:** I'm going to go for 13. Yes.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And actually, let me just frame something here. A crit will get you the top result, even if you didn't pick the 13. Like, if you didn't pick the 16, rather, because it's a crit, you know? So.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** I just want to frame that up top for people. So you said 13 for this one.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** I think you've demonstrated why. You're going to get in some conceptual spaces with him here. [Ali and Jack laugh quietly] This is not just, "Where were you born?" This is, "Can a photograph be a metaphor?" [Ali laughs quietly] Is everyone helping?

**Jack:** Oh yeah, absolutely.

**Dre:** I would love to.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Give me your Insight + Willpower Checks. Looking for a 10. That's a 17 from Jonathan. Where was that before?

**Jack:** Whoa.

**Dre:** Of fucking course.

**Austin:** That's a 14 from Elena and an 8 from Nicky. Jonathan and Elena, do either of you have Bonds with Veile?

**Dre:** Yes. I have a +2 Bond with Veile.

**Jack:** I think I also have a +2 Bond with Veile.

**Austin:** All right.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So then, Veile, take a +4 to this, 2 from Jonathan and Elena succeeding and then a 2 from the fact that the highest Bond you have with one of your supporters is 2.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** So, Insight + Willpower + 4. You're looking for a 13.

**Ali:** Well, that's a 17.

**Austin:** That's a 17! Not a crit, just a 17. Hey, that's 3. That's not bad. How did I type this out before? [typing] After interview equals 3 of— I said 12. It should be 3 of 16. There we go. 3 of 16. All right. That's 75 asta in the bag. I think the interview goes, like, the running conversation you have during this journey turns out to be pretty okay, you know? What type of details are you getting? Especially being— I think this is good, Veile, because you were the one who was like, "Why are all your questions about food?" and now you're the one leading, [Ali laughs] so thankfully, it might not have to be that.

**Ali:** I do think Veile's sort of like, "I will only do this if we do it from the heart."

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

Ali (as **Veile**): And in a way, a conversation's like a photograph, but also, photographs are really important, because they're, like, permanent, and I'm really curious about how you feel about how you work [**Austin:** Mm.] and, you know, what do you think of your legacy, and like, what do you think about what you—

Do you think you have, like, a unique perspective on town here? And you said that you could, like—

Art (as **Nicky**): [hushed] Don't forget the carrots! [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Veile**): Shhh! Shhh! [Austin chuckles]

Art (as **Nicky**): [quietly] All right. People are going to be like, “Where’s the carrots?”

**Austin**: Yeah.

**Ali**: I think it’s good.

**Austin**: And I think you get good answers on this stuff, you know? We'll see how it comes out in the wash, but I think you're getting, you know, he *does* have a unique perspective. He *has* been watching the town grow for years and years, and, you know, he does feel— I think part of what you get is, you know, it used to be that this photo was just something that was placed up on the entry hall to the big dome that the Rehearsals take place in, in the Shell Barrow, but now that there's the paper, they go in the paper, and so that means that, like, people can sit with the photo in a different way. That's one of the big things he thinks has changed, right? Like, when he started, you had to go look at the photo in the entry hall, because it was put up on the wall, you know? But now, you can get the paper. You can get the Shining Star and sit at your dining room table and just look at it, and sometimes people leave, people from out of town will leave with the picture in the paper. He gets kind of, like, misty thinking about people in other parts of the continent, like, seeing his photograph, because that's not something he could have ever imagined when he first started down this path as a kid.

**Jack**: Huh.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, sir, I've traveled all the way here from [hesitates] Salaan.

**Ali**: Is that what I named my hometown? Something like that. [laughs]

**Austin:** That's what you named your hometown, yeah. Uh huh.

Ali (as **Veile**): And here I am, helping you take it.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Well, you're not going to help me take it. You're just going to help me get there.

Ali (as **Veile**): Okay.

Austin (as **Waylon**): But nonetheless, I appreciate it. I'm just not giving you any credit.

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, no, no, no, no, no. But like, spiritually, I mean, you know, being a part of the journey.

Austin (as **Waylon**): I believe in spirits, but ghosts can't take photos, so.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, it's funny, when you think about it. There's quite a religious debate about this as well. [Ali and Austin laugh]

**Austin:** Okay. Yeah, it's like this. I see.

**Art:** Whoa. This is going to be this kind of story.

**Austin:** Right.

## **Approaching Beula's Ranch [0:57:04]**

**Austin:** You're approaching the ranch, Beula's ranch up on the way out of town. And I will say: he does not want to stop. He wants to keep going. He has a job. He's an old man. He wants to get there and get back in time for Rehearsal. He doesn't believe that you can do this investigation quick enough for him, but maybe...

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Maybe...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Maybe we get it on the way back?

Jack (as **Elena**): No. No, if we get it on the way back, we won't get it at all. We're going to be so exhausted after going into the mountain.

**Jack:** But I say “mountain” quietly so that he doesn't hear.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

Jack (as **Elena**): I think it's now or never. I mean, I'm happy to try and persuade him.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I mean, you're going to have to.

**Austin:** Yeah.

Ali (as **Veile**): What if we, like, split up and meet, you know, meet up with each other on the mountain later?

Jack (as **Elena**): [hesitantly] We could...we could try that. I've sort of had a run of bad luck, Veile.

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh. Yes.

Jack (as **Elena**): When things get dicey. But I'm happy to try splitting up.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well, I could stick here with Veile.

Jack (as **Elena**): No, Veile should stay with Waylon.

**Dre:** Er, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm sorry. I meant...

(as **Jonathan**): I mean, I could stay here with Elena.

Jack (as **Elena**): You want to go see what the mystery of the cows is, Nicky?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Wow, okay.

**Austin:** You mean Jonathan? [Ali laughs quietly]

**Jack:** Oh, sorry. Now I got them confused. [laughter]

**Austin:** You sure did. What a mess.

**Jack:** Jonathan.

**Austin:** Oh lord.

**Jack:** [laughing] Completely, everybody...

Art (as **Nicky**): I told you, I ain't no animal husband. [Dre laughs]

**Jack:** Sorry, now, hang on.

Art (as **Nicky**): If that's the right word for what I'm talking about. [Austin laughs]

**Jack:** I'll do a clean one to match.

(as **Elena**): You want to go and solve a mystery of some cows, Jonathan?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, why not?

Jack (as **Elena**): See what's what?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah. Yeah.

Jack (as **Elena**): Does that sound good, Veile?

**Austin:** Mm.

Art (as **Nicky**): If you get in trouble, there's not going to be... What if it's like... I don't... I worry about splitting up.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well, that's why I'm staying behind. It'll be fine, Nicky.

Art (as **Nicky**): [unconvinced] All right.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): It's just a farm.

Art (as **Nicky**): It's a mysterious farm.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well, it's a farm that has a potential mystery. I think that's different.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, if we're not comfortable with it, we can just do it on the way back.

Jack (as **Elena**): We're not going to be able to do it on the way back.

Art (as **Nicky**): Why?

Jack (as **Elena**): We're going to be exhausted!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well, maybe you will be.

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah.

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh, come on. [Dre laughs]

Art (as **Nicky**): It's just like doing breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Ali (as **Veile**): And there could be clues on the mountain.

Jack (as **Elena**): It's right here! [Ali laughs quietly]

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I know, and it ain't going nowhere. It's a barn!

Jack (as **Elena**): Can I at least try and convince Waylon, and then if that fails, I suppose we can do it on the way back.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): He might dock your pay if you...

Ali (as **Veile**): Would he do something like that?

Jack (as **Elena**): Would he do something like that?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I don't know. It depends on how good of a job you do. He's very particular. I tried to tell you.

Jack (as **Elena**): Veile, maybe you should try and persuade him. You've been having some rapport or something. [Ali snorts, Art laughs]

**Dre**: Or something! [laughs]

**Ali**: I do. Wait a minute. I literally have a move for this, don't I?

**Art**: Oh, do you have Convince An Old Man Of Something?

**Austin**: Oh.

**Ali**: Girl who be having moves. Hold on. [quiet laughter] I have not done this in a minute. "You may use an action and spend 1 Fabula Point to choose a non-hostile creature able to hear and understand you. If you do, that creature becomes helpful towards you, as long as you are kind and respectful to them and your requests are reasonable."

**Austin**: Yeah. That should work.

**Jack**: Perfect move.

**Art**: All right.

**Austin**: You got a Fabula Point to spend on this? Presumably, because we just started the session.

**Ali**: I have 1 Fabula Point.

**Austin**: Yeah. Okay.

**Art**: Oh, I forgot to take my beginning-of-session Fabula Point.

**Jack**: No, you get them at the end of the session, right?

**Austin:** Nope.

**Art:** My point is I should have 1 Fabula Point.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** If you have 0 when you start a session, you get 1.

**Jack:** Oh, if you have 0, you start a session. Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Art:** I've been over here afraid of Fabula needing.

**Austin:** I see. So yeah, go ahead and spend that point, and give me a... What are you asking?

Ali (as **Veile**): Sir, I certainly understand that this is a time sensitive issue for you, but I think that if we could take a break before ascending, you understand.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Mm. Well, what's for lunch?

Art (as **Nicky**): What do you want?

Austin (as **Waylon**): Well, what do you got? You bring us— you got a picnic basket with you? I don't see one on you.

Art (as **Nicky**): We're a group of talented restaurateurs, and I a talented chef.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Wait, I thought you were adventurers to defend my life, protect me from the wilderness.

Art (as **Nicky**): I'm a man of many talents. You don't think I could protect you?

Austin (as **Waylon**): You're quite big.

Art (as **Nicky**): And look at the size of my fork. I feel like you should have noticed it was a fork.

Austin (as **Waylon**): I was mostly concerned with its efficacy as a weapon.

Art (as **Nicky**): Pokes real good. But also, it's for eatin'.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Well.

Art (as **Nicky**): Well, you know, you gotta wash it.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Hmmm.

Art (as **Nicky**): It's clean now.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Open-faced fish.

Ali (as **Veile**): Ooh.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Toasted bread.

Art (as **Nicky**): Jonathan, you know what this is?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, no, with a little— on a bed of warm grits.

Art (as **Nicky**): That's right.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): All right.

Art (as **Nicky**): Boy can leave home, but his tongue don't.

Jack (as **Elena**): That's what they say.

Art (as **Nicky**): We don't got any of that. I don't... [Austin and Jack laugh]

Austin (as **Waylon**): Well, you asked.

Art (as **Nicky**): How about... [Austin and Jack laugh]

**Ali:** You don't have any fishies?

Art (as **Nicky**): How about a jellyfish salad?

Ali (as **Veile**): Ooh.

Jack (as **Elena**): Delicious.

Austin (as **Waylon**): [disdainfully] Oh, you're one of them fancy chefs.

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, I said I have a big fork.

Austin (as **Waylon**): I thought that was something a cook might have. Run of the mill.

Art (as **Nicky**): I'll have you know that I am an award-winning chef.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Eh. Ugh. Ick.

Art (as **Nicky**): I don't remember the name of the award, but it's very prestigious.

**Austin**: I mean, that is true. You did win that competition, so, yeah.

**Dre**: Mm-hmm.

**Art**: Yeah.

Austin (as **Waylon**): I don't make much hay for award-winning chefs. I like someone who can make me a good meal, hearty, keep this old body moving.

Art (as **Nicky**): The jellyfish salad is heartier than you think. There's a lot of meat on that jellyfish.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): It's fried too.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Oh. Why didn't you lead with that? Well, fine. We can take a little lunch break.

Art (as **Nicky**): That's not how people talk about salads. You don't say fried first. You say the ingredient first.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): You gotta understand—

Austin (as **Waylon**): You don't say "jellyfish fried salad." You'd say a fried jellyfish salad.

Art (as **Nicky**): I think you just say "jellyfish salad," and then it is fried.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Not where I'm from. You gotta differentiate.

Art (as **Nicky**): Well, this isn't a regional dish.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Hmmm. Fine.

**Art:** The exciting thing is I've never made a salty bitter meal before, so I'll get to find out what that flavor combination does.

**Austin:** And while you're doing that, presumably someone is going to look at some oxes, some oxen, and meet Beula.

**Art:** Yeah, I gotta figure out how to heat up some oil out here.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** You're going to check the table. It's going to say, "poison old man." [Austin and Dre laugh] Okay. I'm going to go down to the farm.

**Austin:** All right. Anyone going with Elena?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Please!

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Jonathan is going.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Ali:** I am also going.

**Austin:** So there— okay, so you're all going? Is it just everybody except—? How's—

**Art:** Well, how long does it take to make this salad?

**Austin:** That's my question.

**Art:** I mean, there's no mechanic to this. [Ali laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Yeah, I guess not. You could just do it at the farm.

**Art:** I could do it in a round in a...

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah. True. All right, you're going to go there. You're going to sit there for lunch. And I think that there's a little bit of asking you, Veile, from Waylon, who's like,

(as **Waylon**): So, is this where lunch is going to be? At this old, at this farm that you were all planning to go to? [Jack laughs] It's fine. It's fine. You're doing a good job. You spent the Fabula Point.

**Ali:** [laughs] This turtle old man, "You spent the Fabula Point."

Austin (as **Waylon**): That's right. Good enough for me.

**Dre:** Oh, we got Deadpool.

**Austin:** That's right. Ooh, a 12, Art. What's that do?

**Art:** Ooh, a 12. So that means that this, during the next turn, each of this delicacy's targets, all damage they deal becomes the type of my choice.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Art:** Wait, do I already have that one?

**Austin:** You might. That sounds familiar to me.

**Art:** No, I have 5 extra damage.

**Austin:** I see.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Art:** For a chosen target.

**Austin:** That's a pretty cool one.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Dre:** That is cool.

**Austin:** Yum.

(as **Waylon**): Feel like I could spit fire.

Art (as **Nicky**): And you can, but only for one round.

**Austin:** Only for a few seconds, that's right. [Dre laughs] The farm— I'll give you the highlights, and we can maybe take a break here. You know, as you near the farm, you see the situation, which is there are fields that have been half dredged up or kind of rice paddies that have been half dredged up and then stopped. There's a set of oxes inside of, you know, a little enclosed pasture that are sitting on the ground in a way that does not look particularly healthy. They look like they're weak. And I think, you know, as you approach the house proper, you hear the sound of a bell ringing, as, around back, they are unfortunately finishing up the service for their deeply loved ox who passed just this morning and have buried him in the ground. You hear the sounds of tears from...not from Beula herself but maybe from Beula's kids. The place has a sort of strange stench to it, beyond just it's a ranch and ranches have some smells going on. There's something acidic or acrid in the air, and there's something, like, metallic and almost copper in the air. Mixing together, it's hard to breathe in a little bit.

And I think Beula comes over, comes around and sees you and sees Waylon. I think Waylon actually makes it connect for her. She's, I'd say, probably a little younger than you, Jonathan. She's like from a cohort after yours, you know, a few clutches after

yours by a few decades, and so is younger, but, you know, always— you knew her in a sort of— like, older than your sister but younger than you. You knew her as someone who, like, never really liked the hustle and bustle of Spillaway Peaks the town but really liked being closer to the Clayridge Mountains, being up here. Liked to go on, you know, field trips or whatever; liked to go out into the wilderness. It's not surprising that she'd end up being a rancher here. And so, I think, you know, when she sees you, she says,

(as **Beula**): Jonathan. I didn't know you were working for the paper these days. Good to see you in town.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, it's... Well, it's been mostly good to be back, and yeah, I figured I'd help out old Theo. You know, old time's sake.

Austin (as **Beula**): You coming to look after my oxes, huh?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Best we can.

Austin (as **Beula**): Mm. Your friends are cattle experts, then.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Uh, no, but they are incredibly resourceful.

Austin (as **Beula**): Well, that'll have to do. Come on in. I'll pour you some tea.

**Austin:** And as you walk in, you kind of walk past some of the sicker oxen, and I think, you know, one of them lets out like a low, "Mrrr," as you move past them. It's not looking good here. Looking kind of dire.

[["Perpetua"](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]